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NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

B.C. FIRE CREWS DEPLOYED TO QUEBEC

VICTORIA – British Columbia is sending 64 forest fire fighters and specialists to Quebec to help that province respond to elevated fire activity in the Val d'Or area, announced Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman today.

"As British Columbians, we know what it's like to face a difficult forest fire situation. We're pleased that we are able to assist our Quebec counterparts at this time," said Coleman.

Firefighters and specialists from across B.C. will be flying to Quebec today for up to 19 days. Crews being deployed come from the Northwest and Kamloops fire centres, and include three unit crews of 20 people each, who are dispatched to larger fires where significant resources may be needed, three sector leaders, who are trained to supervise staff and equipment in work areas, and one bilingual agency representative.

Eastern Ontario and Quebec is experiencing a warming and drying weather trend, with a lightning storm that moved through the area on Thursday causing a number of fire starts.

This is the second deployment of British Columbia fire crews this year, with 141 crew members deployed to Ontario on May 20. Both deployments were co-ordinated through the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC). Costs of the deployment are being paid by the requesting provinces.

The public reports nearly half of all wildfires in B.C. Please continue to report smoke and flames by calling toll free 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on most cellular networks.

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Note to media: Quebec Society for the Prevention of Wildfire website: http://www.sopfeu.qc.ca

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